

# ACCELERATED STRATEGIC COMPUTING INITIATIVE

(ASCI)

RFP C6939RFP6-3X

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

APRIL 10, 1996

85.           Reference:     Attachment 2, Paragraph 4.1.1.2, SST Component Scaling
- Question:     This paragraph requires a delivery of 75TB of disk for the SST on the targeted delivery date of Q2 CY98. This Offeror believes that a reasonable alternative solution would be to require an initial delivery of 25TB's of disk at that time with a Target Requirement to procure an additional 50TB of disk one year later.
- Response:     This requirement has been revised to 25 TB RAID disk with the SST delivery in 4Q CY 1998 and the remaining 50 TB RAID disk no later than 4Q CY 1999. Statement of Work Section 3.1, general delivery schedule table, and specifications 6.2.10 and 6.2.12 have been revised. Mandatory Requirement (MR) 6.2.16 and Target Requirement (TR) 6.2.17 have also been added. See Amendment No. 4.
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86.           Reference:     Attachment 2, Paragraph 4.1.1.2, SST Component Scaling
- Question:     This paragraph requires a total aggregate processor to cache bandwidth of a least 12 TB/s. This bandwidth requirement does not materially affect sPPM code performance expectations. . . . It does, however, determine the *minimum* required number of processors to be delivered. . . . We request that this requirement be reduced to 8 TB/s.
- Response:     Specification 4.1.1.2, bullet three has been revised to read "Cache Bandwidth/Peak FP (Byte/s/FLOP/s)   4". Bullet four has been revised to read "Memory Bandwidth/Peak FP (Byte/s/FLOP/s)   1". See Amendment No. 4.
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87.           Reference:     Attachment 2, Paragraph 4.1.1.3 and Attachment 3, Paragraph C.3
- Question:     Attachment 3, Paragraph C.3 states that the ceiling amount for funds to be made available for this ASCI Blue subcontract is \$100 Million. This allocation shows an estimated \$25 Million for each Fiscal year. Paragraph 4.1.1.3 of Attachment 2 states that the Subcontractor shall install at least 1.5 TB of memory in the SST as an option. This requirement is categorized as a

Mandatory Option. This vendor suggests that the cost of delivering this amount of memory is contradictory to the funding estimates shown in Attachment 3. In order to facilitate the University being able to procure the SST system within the budget estimates set, this vendor recommends that the University make the requirements of Paragraph 4.1.1.3 a Target Requirement instead of Mandatory Option. Our rationale is that according to the Model Contract, the Memory Upgrade price is a not to exceed price. This paragraph also states that if the then current market price of this option is more advantageous, the price of this option shall be subject to downward negotiation.

Given the above stated contractual requirements, this vendor recommends that the University strongly consider changing Paragraph 4.1.1.3 from a Mandatory Option to a Target Requirement.

Response: Specification 4.1.1.3 remains unchanged. While the University does not anticipate changes to the \$100M budget profile for this contract, the actual annual funding allocation may allow for more flexibility to match the contract milestones than the \$25M per year presently estimated. Therefore, Offerors should consider the overall project budget, rather than the annual allocation estimate, when pricing this mandatory option or other requirements. Offerors are also encouraged to consider innovative and creative financial alternatives and incentives when pricing this and other ASCI requirements.

88. Reference: Attachment 2, Section 4.1.1.3

Question: The memory upgrade to 1.5 TeraBytes for the SST system is currently categorized as a Mandatory Option (MO), to be exercised at the discretion of the University. By handling such a large portion of the bid costs in this way, Offerors are forced to build the memory cost into their pricing model with the possibility of having to deliver it. We recommend that you separate the SST memory upgrade from the remainder of the contract. Make the memory upgrade an unevaluated Technical Option which can be exercised by the University outside the scope of the planned contract.

Response: This requirement remains unchanged. See question and answer #87.

89. Reference: Attachment 2, Section 4.2.3.4

Question: We interpret this mandatory requirement to mean that the Offeror must deliver a total, formal cluster-wide Single System Image (SSI). . . . We request that this mandatory requirement be changed to a target requirement.

Response: Specification 4.2.3.4 has been changed to a Target Requirement (see Amendment No. 4). However, it is the University's belief that a total SSI implementation is not required to satisfy the intent of this specification. What is required is a coherent mechanism to initiate and control jobs spanning multiple SMPs within the cluster as a single entity. The University believes that existing commercial/public domain products, such as Load Sharing Facility (LSF) or Portable Batch System (PBS), may meet this requirement.

Another possible alternative may be to layer a cluster resource management system above the underlying SMP operating system without any additional SSI features.

90. Reference: Attachment 4, Paragraphs 2 and 6; Attachment 3, Paragraph C.7

Question: Paragraph 2, Selection Process, states that the selection process will include an Analysis of the Overall Price. Paragraph 6 of Attachment 4, defines the Overall Price Evaluation. Attachment 3, paragraph C.7 (as amended) states that “for informational purposes” Offerors are to provide the “full” purchase price for each major subsection. Based on all of this information, this Offeror requests that the University provide the methodology by which the cost proposals will be evaluated. For example, will vendors be evaluated based on “full” price? If one Offeror offers to provide and price all of the Targeted Requirements and another Offeror chooses not to, how will the University evaluate the costs of these two offerings? Will the University be utilizing a Present Value (PV) analysis of all cost proposals? If so, what is the interest rate?

It is our interpretation that for evaluation purposes, the cost evaluation will include only the Mandatory Requirements and the Mandatory Options, after any offered discounts or incentives offered, have been applied. Please specify if this interpretation is correct. If it is not, we request that the University specify the exact method that all of the Cost Proposals will be evaluated.

Response: As stated in Attachment 4, paragraph 8, award will be based on the proposal which offers the **best overall value** to the University. To determine the overall best value, the University will evaluate all offered features, both Mandatory (MR, MO) and Target (TR), and their overall cost. The prices used will be the proposed prices for the Mandatory and Target features after any offered discounts or incentives have been applied.

91. Reference: Applicable Taxes

Question: Since the Offerors do not know for sure what state (NM or CA) the equipment might be installed in, if they were to be awarded a contract, is it all right to keep taxes outside of the bottom line pricing which is provided back with the RFP response? (The rate would be different per state and per year, etc.).

Response: Price proposals should exclude taxes. Applicable taxes will be determined at the time of contract award.

End of Questions & Answers - 4/10/96